

## Message Text

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TO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

USDEL MBFR VIENNA PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 064853

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PARM, NATO

SUBJECT:MBFR: THE COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT ON THE COMMON  
CEILING

REF: A. NATO 1022, B. NATO 1156, C. STATE 34467

1. WE HAVE CAREFULLY REVIEWED THE ALLIED VIEWS ON THE  
COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT REPORTED REFS A AND B AND LOOK FORWARD  
TO FURTHER COMMENTS. YOU MAY DRAW ON THE FOLLOWING AS A  
FURTHER US CONTRIBUTION TO ALLIED DISCUSSIONS ON THE

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SUBJECT.

2. WE WISH TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE AHG IS SEEKING GUIDANCE TO REASSURE THE EAST THAT THE COMMON CEILING IS A WORKABLE CONCEPT. IN THIS CONTEXT, WE CONCUR THAT IT IS UNNECESSARY AND INAPPROPRIATE FOR THE ALLIES TO AGREE ON TREATY LANGUAGE OR ON THE FORM OF A FUTURE AGREEMENT.

3. WE WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT MAKING THE IDENTIFICATION OF WHO IS BEING OBLIGATED JOINTLY (E.G., WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS) WILL NOT, WE BELIEVE, CHANGE THE NATURE OF THE INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENT EACH DIRECT PARTICIPANT WOULD BE ASSUMING. MOREOVER, WE BELIEVE THAT A JOINT OBLIGATION WOULD PERMIT THE EAST TO MAINTAIN ITS ARGUMENT THAT THE WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS CONTINUE TO REFUSE TO ACCEPT

SPECIFIC OBLIGATIONS. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT NEITHER A JOINT COMMITMENT NOR AN INDIVIDUAL ONE COULD BE INTERPRETED AS LEADING TO NATIONAL SUBCEILINGS, SINCE EACH PARTICIPANT IS ONLY COMMITTING ITSELF TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE OVERALL AGREED TOTAL ON EACH SIDE, NOT TO ANY SPECIFIC LEVEL FOR ITS OWN FORCES. AN INDIVIDUAL STATE BECOMES BOUND TO A SPECIFIC POST-REDUCTION FORCE LEVEL IN THE NGA ONLY SO LONG AS THE OVERALL TOTAL OF FORCES ON THE ONE SIDE EQUALS THE COMMON CEILING. ONCE A STATE DECREASED ITS FORCES, ITS ALLIES COULD CHANGE THEIR SPECIFIC FORCE LEVELS. HOWEVER, IF OTHER WESTERN ALLIES BELIEVE IT IS USEFUL FOR TACTICAL REASONS TO EXPRESS THIS OBLIGATION IN COLLECTIVE TERMS, WE ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER IT.

4. IN VIEW OF DISCUSSION THUS FAR, WE WOULD BE WILLING TO CONSIDER CHANGING OUR FORMULATION (REF C, PARA 3) TO REFER TO JOINT RATHER THAN INDIVIDUAL OBLIGATIONS AND TO BROADEN THE OBLIGATION TO INCLUDE TAKING WHATEVER ACTIONS ARE REQUIRED TO KEEP GROUND FORCE MANPOWER FROM EXCEEDING THE AGREED COMMON CEILING LEVEL. THUS, TICKS ONE AND THREE OF OUR FORMULATION COULD BE COMBINED AS FOLLOWS:

--THE WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS WOULD AGREE TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NECESSARY WITH RESPECT TO FORCE LEVELS IN THE REDUCTIONS AREA TO KEEP THE TOTAL GROUND FORCE MANPOWER IN THE WESTERN PORTION OF THE AREA FROM EXCEEDING  
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THE AGREED COMMON CEILING.

A SIMILAR REWORDING OF THE EASTERN COMMITMENT WOULD ALSO BE MADE. THIS FORMULATION WOULD DO THE FOLLOWING:

(A) IT WOULD BAN ANY DIRECT PARTICIPANT FROM INCREASING ITS FORCES, IF THE INCREASE WOULD RESULT IN THE COMMON CEILING BEING EXCEEDED; OR IT WOULD OBLIGATE DIRECT

PARTICIPANTS TO DECREASE THEIR FORCES IF INCREASES IN FORCES ON THEIR SIDE OF THE NGA CAUSED THE COMMON CEILING TO BE EXCEEDED.

(B) IT WOULD PERMIT DIRECT PARTICIPANTS TO INCREASE THEIR FORCES TO THE EXTENT THAT ANOTHER DIRECT PARTICIPANT ON THE SAME SIDE DECREASES ITS FORCES.

(C) IT WOULD PREVENT ANY DIRECT PARTICIPANT FROM ALLOWING A STATE NOT A PARTY TO THE AGREEMENT TO INTRODUCE FORCES ONTO ITS TERRITORY WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE COMMON CEILING BEING EXCEEDED.

5. WE BELIEVE THIS FORMULATION MAKES CLEAR THAT DIRECT PARTICIPANTS COULD INCREASE THEIR POST-REDUCTION FORCES IN THE NGA BY AN AMOUNT NO GREATER THAN ANY DECREASE AMONG

OTHER STATES WITH FORCES ON THE SAME SIDE OF THE NGA. THIS IS SO BECAUSE EACH DIRECT PARTICIPANT IS ONLY COMMITTED TO THE COLLECTIVE CEILING, NOT INDIVIDUAL NATIONAL CEILINGS.

6. THIS FORMULATION WOULD NECESSITATE CONSULTATIONS AND AGREEMENT TO ADJUST FORCES, AS NECESSARY, WITHIN THE COMMON CEILING LEVEL. WESTERN PARTICIPANTS COULD INFORM THE EAST THAT ALTHOUGH THE COMMITMENT NECESSITATES COORDINATION AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS ON EACH SIDE, THIS IS A MATTER INTERNAL TO EACH ALLIANCE. SUCH A STATEMENT WOULD PRESUMABLY BE ACCOMPANIED BY ASSURANCES AND EXAMPLES ABOUT HOW TO HANDLE SUSPECTED VIOLATIONS.

7. IF THE FORCE TOTAL EXCEEDS THE COMMON CEILING, THE FORMULATION IN PARAGRAPH 3 ABOVE COULD, IN THE ABSENCE OF COMMON WESTERN ACTION TO REDUCE FORCE LEVELS, OBLIGATE  
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EACH DIRECT PARTICIPANT TO DECREASE ITS FORCES TO THE EXTENT REQUIRED. HOWEVER, SINCE ALL THE DIRECT PARTICIPANTS WOULD, IN SUCH A CASE, BE IN VIOLATION OF THE AGREEMENT, THEY COULD PURSUE ANY ACTION AMONG THEMSELVES WHICH WOULD RETURN THE TOTAL FORCES IN THE AREA TO WITHIN THE COMMON CEILING. CONSEQUENTLY, THE OBLIGATION IS PLACED ON ALL EQUALLY.

8. WITH RESPECT TO THE POSSIBLE USE OF NON-CIRCUMVENTION LANGUAGE TO HANDLE THE "OTHER STATES" PROBLEMS, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE REASSURING TO THE EAST. THE EAST WOULD WANT TO KNOW WHY THE ALLIES ARE NOT WILLING TO BE SPECIFIC, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE EAST IS. YOU MAY ALSO DRAW ON ARGUMENTS IN VIENNA 076 TO REINFORCE THIS POINT.

9. THIS GUIDANCE DRAFTED BEFORE NATO 1555 RECEIVED. WE  
WOULD STILL LIKE MISSION TO MAKE ABOVE CONTRIBUTION TO  
SPC DISCUSSION. INGERSOLL

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